

FRANKLIN COUNTY, OHIO

# Franklin County Extreme Heat Plan

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Franklin County Emergency Management and  
Homeland Security



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## Introduction

Extreme heat events are characterized by stagnant, warm air masses and consecutive nights with high temperatures. An extreme heat event, or heat wave, is a prolonged period of excessively hot weather, which may be accompanied by high humidity. Extreme heat is relative to the usual weather of an area. Temperatures considered normal in a hotter climate may be considered extreme in a normally cooler area.

Heat is the number one non-severe weather-related killer in the United States. In the 40-year period from 1936 through 1975, nearly 20,000 people were killed in the United States by the effects of heat and solar radiation. The July 2006 North American heat wave killed over 200 people nationwide; at least half of the victims were elderly. Deaths from complications of pre-existing medical conditions during excessive heat can be higher than the above.

People respond differently to extreme heat based on their place of residence, the precautions they take, and their personal susceptibility and acclimatization to heat. In regions of high humidity, excessive heat can make being outside unbearable. In regions of low humidity, the most common human response to extreme heat is dehydration. (*Risk Assessment for Franklin County, 2010*)

The types of populations that would be considered high-risk groups in an extreme heat event may include, but are not limited to the following:

- The elderly, infants, young children, and pregnant women
- People suffering from a mental illness, dementia, etc.
- People with a chronic illness
- People who are house/bed bound
- People taking certain types of medications
- Groups involved with outdoor sports activities
- Those lacking air conditioning

The following are three categories of heat injury (source: BUMED DOD):

Heat Cramps. Heat cramps are painful cramps of muscles, usually in the stomach, legs, and/or arms. They are caused by loss of electrolytes in the body due to excessive sweating. Heat cramps may occur without the individual feeling thirsty.

Heat Exhaustion. This condition is defined as the result of peripheral vascular collapse due to excessive water and salt depletion. Symptoms include profuse sweating, headache, weakness, pallor, nausea, vomiting, mild shortness of breath, and palpitations.

Heat Stroke. This is a medical emergency that may result in death if care is delayed. It is typically defined as a core temperature greater than 105° Fahrenheit or any change in mental status of an affected individual with any elevated core temperature. It is caused by a failure of the body's ability to maintain optimum core body temperature (cool itself).

## **I. Purpose/Mission**

Establish a countywide coordinated approach to provide cooling relief and/or information to all residents within Franklin County in order to protect their health and safety during a designated Heat Emergency.

## **II. Assumptions**

- A. Extreme Heat may be an annual occurrence.
- B. The National Weather Service (NWS) will be relied on to provide timely heat advisories, watches, and warnings.
- C. The population may need assistance.
- D. Partner agencies listed in this plan are available to provide resources in a coordinated effort.
- E. Heat index is a measurement of the air temperature in relation to the relative humidity, used as an indicator of discomfort. The heat index is high when high temperatures occur with high humidity.
- F. In extreme heat situations, hospitals may not only experience a surge of patients requiring medical care, but also an increased number of public residents seeking an accessible building to cool off. This has the potential of diverting healthcare resources to non-healthcare related issues.
- G. Extreme heat conditions and adverse consequences may develop to the point of an emergency beyond a jurisdiction's response capabilities and resources.

### III. Criteria for Plan Activation

- A. In the event of an extreme heat emergency, an Incident Commander or Jurisdictional Chief Elected Official can request that the Franklin County Emergency Operations Center (FCEOC) be activated. The Director of FCEM&HS can increase scalable staffing of the FCEOC as required.
- B. Individual agencies and/or jurisdictions may implement parts of the plan individually without FCEOC staffing.
- C. The following weather alerts will be considered in plan activation:
  - a. A **HEAT ADVISORY** is issued if the National Weather Service (NWS) forecasts a heat index of 100°F – 104°F.
  - b. An **EXCESSIVE HEAT WATCH / WARNING** is issued if the NWS forecasts a heat index of  $\geq 105^{\circ}\text{F}$ .
    - 1. A watch is issued when these conditions are expected beyond the first 12 – 24 hours.
    - 2. A warning is issued when these conditions are expected either imminently or in the first 12 – 24 hours.

### IV. Agency Tasks

- A. Columbus Public Health (CPH) and Franklin County Board of Health (FCBH)
  - 1. Provide Emergency Support Function (ESF) Representative to County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) – ESF #8 (Health and Medical).
  - 2. Notify conduits of “Vulnerable” populations.
  - 3. Monitor weather/heat conditions.
  - 4. Monitor heat related illness and death.
  - 5. Create and distribute emergency public health information (ESF #15).
    - a. Internal Heat Outreach
    - b. External Heat Advisory, Watch, and Warnings
  - 6. Work with other response partner agencies to provide talking points and FAQ sheets to 2-1-1 and 3-1-1.
  - 7. Coordinate with City and County Departments on additional response efforts.

B. Franklin County Emergency Management and Homeland Security (FCEM&HS)

1. Coordinate Response through the Franklin County EOC – ESF #1 (Transportation), ESF #5 (Emergency Management), ESF #6 (Mass Care), ESF #7 (Logistics Management and Resource Support), ESF #8 (Public Health and Medical), ESF #12 (Energy), and ESF #15 (Emergency Public Information).
2. Maintain a Countywide Common Operational Picture (COP) and Situational Awareness.
3. Perform assessment.
4. Collect data.
5. Coordinate response.
6. Coordinate Current and Future Planning.
7. Coordinate and Support ESF #15 Public Information.
8. Notify the community through warning systems.
9. Communicate with the National Weather Service (NWS).
10. Initiate and maintain communications with energy providers.

C. American Red Cross (ARC)

1. Provide ESF Representative to County EOC – ESF #6.
2. Provide public education (specific to extreme heat).
3. Logistical Support.
4. Cooling centers.
5. Support first responders on scene as requested.
6. Be prepared to distribute public information with ESF #15.

D. Central Ohio Trauma System (COTS)

1. Provide ESF Representative to County EOC – ESF #8.
2. Monitor real-time hospital data on the Central Ohio Healthcare Disaster Information Management System (COHDIMS), SurgeNet, and the Real Time Activity Status (RTAS) websites.
3. Serve as an information clearinghouse to hospitals and partner agencies and assist in allocation of resources.
4. Be prepared to distribute public information with ESF #15.
5. Provide timely and appropriate notification to hospitals.

E. Franklin County Office on Aging (FCOA)

1. Provide ESF Representative to County EOC – ESF #6.
2. Maintain list/database of “Vulnerable” FCOA-clients.
3. Notify/contact “Vulnerable” FCOA-clients.
4. Distribute Fans.
5. Outreach to senior citizens in community.
6. Be prepared to distribute public information with ESF #15.
7. Be prepared to execute transportation for certain “Vulnerable” clients.

F. Central Ohio Area Agency on Aging (COAAA)

1. Provide ESF Representative to County EOC – ESF #6.
2. Of 5000 case managed clients – well-being checks in extreme weather for those on priority list (e.g. without air conditioning, no caregiver, power outages).
3. Notification/contact of COAAA-clients.
4. Linking clients and information callers to identified fan distributions, air condition distribution, and Crisis Cooling Programs.
5. Create organizational link to City of Columbus Recreation and Parks Department to coordinate cooling centers.
6. Be prepared to execute transportation to COAAA heat priority clients.
7. Be prepared to distribute public information with ESF #15.

G. HandsOn Central Ohio (HOCO)

1. Provide ESF Representative to County EOC – ESF #6
  - a. Leveraging Citizen Corps Volunteers when requested.
2. Be prepared to provide 24-hour operations Information Referral – 2-1-1.
3. Be prepared to provide multilingual messaging and/or operators as needed.
4. Report heat specific geographic and/or demographic trends to County EOC.
5. Be prepared to distribute public information with ESF #15.

H. American Electric Power (AEP)

1. Provide ESF Representative to County EOC – ESF #12.
2. Be prepared to distribute public information with ESF #15.
3. Collect data regarding power consumption.
4. Be prepared to provide energy consumption and capacity information trends to County EOC.
5. Provide energy management strategies.

I. Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC)

1. Provide ESF Representative to County EOC – ESF #1.
2. Coordinate Air Quality Alert press released with ESF # 15 to include:
  - a. How advisories affect similar “Vulnerable” populations.
  - b. Tips to avoid adverse health implications that relate to both advisories.

J. Educational Council

1. Provide representative to County EOC:
  - a. Provide a direct link to all school districts within Franklin County.
2. Be prepared to distribute public information with ESF #15.
3. Support Mass Care operations with partner agencies.
4. Support Central Ohio Transit Authority (COTA) on any transportation needs.
5. Update all district and schools Emergency Management Plans to incorporate the extreme heat plan when finalized.

K. Central Ohio Poison Control (COPC)

1. Provide advice for cooling center workers and public health regarding effects of heat on people taking various medications.
2. Be prepared to distribute public information with ESF #15.
3. Provide referral to appropriate resource links.

L. Columbus Division of Fire

1. Be prepared to distribute public information with ESF #15.
2. Coordinate fan collection.
3. Distribute heat related education materials.



M. Life Care Alliance

1. Provide ESF Representative to County EOC – ESF #6.
2. Continue partnership with the Columbus Division of Fire to serve as drop-off locations for donated fans.
3. Continue to be a point of contact for the most vulnerable residents in Central Ohio who register to receive fans.
4. Function as a distribution site for fans when donations become available.
5. Continue to air Public Service Announcements in conjunction with ESF #15.

N. The Breathing Association

1. Be prepared to work with low income (200% of poverty level) medically vulnerable households.
2. Distribute collected fans to these households.
3. Distribute air conditioners to eligible vulnerable households.
4. Distribute medical supplies to vulnerable households with breathing difficulties and prescriptions.
5. Provide for assistance in electric payments and budget plans for eligible households.

O. Columbus Department of Public Utilities (DPU)

1. Work with the Mayor's office and Division of Fire regarding any use of hydrants to cool the public.
2. Work with the Mayor's office regarding temporary suspension of new water and electric turnoffs during high heat declarations.
3. Continue to train DPU workers in high heat safety.

P. Columbus Recreation and Parks Department

1. Work with the Division of Fire to open 8 air conditioned recreation centers to be used as "cooling centers."
2. Operate free outdoor pools- Tuttle, Marion Franklin, Dodge and Windsor (Hours- 1:30-6:30 p.m., Tuttle open till 7:30 daily).
3. Manage an outdoor sprayground at Barnett Recreation Center (Hours- Noon- 7:30 p.m. daily).

Q. Columbus Department of Public Service

1. Notify and educate 3-1-1 Call Center staff and establish referrals.
2. Assist with traffic control as needed (e.g., at cooling centers as necessary).
3. Block streets and assist with parking as needed when/if fire hydrants are opened.

R. Fire Departments in Franklin County

1. The majority of Fire Departments in Franklin County coordinate fan collection.

S. Columbus Division of Police

1. Community Liaison Officers (LNO) will do checks of residence of known elderly and special needs people that reside on their assigned precincts.
2. Patrol and traffic officers will provide security and traffic control on streets as needed to ensure the safety of the public.
3. Personnel will provide security as needed at designated cooling centers.
4. While on patrol, officers will be vigilant to people experiencing heat related problems and provide assistance or summon medical attention as necessary.
5. Provide traffic control and other law enforcement related duties in areas experiencing power outages due to extreme heat as needed.

**V. Conclusion**

The Franklin County Extreme Heat Plan is a coordinated effort among various partner agencies throughout Central Ohio. As in any emergency, scalable resources are used to respond to incidents that require subject matter experts that provide knowledge and support to current and future planning efforts. There may be some agencies that are not listed in the plan that can provide direct or indirect support to an extreme heat event and may be called upon based upon need.